Economic Reforms and Welfare Systems in the USSR, Poland and Hungary. by Jan Adam
Review by: Alastair McAuley
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in 1986. It was these groups that in 1988 started seriously to challenge the dominant role of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, substantially contributing to its eventual downfall and to the breakup of the USSR at the end of 1991. The authors rightly argue that most of the studies devoted to the period of Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika tend to focus on the decisions and actions taken by the political elite and fail to pay enough attention to the importance of "perestroika from below"—i.e., the role of society in shaping events in the late 1980s–early 1990s. By attempting to write the history of the Soviet Union between 1985 and late 1991 from the perspective of the independent political movements, the authors seek to correct this imbalance.

The book starts with Geoffrey Hosking examining the origins of the independent movements of the perestroika period in the dissident circles of the 1970s and early 1980s. This is followed by Jonathan Aves's overview of the activities of these movements after 1988. Separate case studies examine the development of independent organizations in the Russian Federation in general, and in St. Petersburg in particular (Peter Duncan); in Georgia (Aves) and in Estonia (Hosking). The final case study by Aves describes Russia's labor movement and its potential role in providing a mass social base for democratic reforms. The concluding chapter, written by all three authors, focuses on the role of the independent movements in such key events in the history of the USSR as the election of Boris Yeltsin to the presidency of Russia and the failure of the attempted coup in August 1991. The book contains an appendix, listing the USSR's major independent political organizations as of late 1991.

The main strength of the book is that it focuses on how society, rather than the top leadership, acted in the period of perestroika. However, this also predetermines the book's main weakness. In their attempt to detail the major actions of hundreds of political groups that have emerged in the USSR since 1986, the authors at times seem to overlook the broader political context in which the activities of the independent movements were taking place. It also seems to be a result of this narrow focus that leads the authors somewhat to neglect the role of the CPSU itself in bringing about the USSR's fragile multi-party system. The CPSU's role is mentioned in the book only in connection with attempts on the part of its leadership to suppress the activities of the independent movements. But the Party's role was much greater.

The leaders of the majority of important independent movements, especially in Russia, were neither dissidents nor members of the youth clubs (as one might conclude from the book's chapter on the origins of the independent movements), but middle-level reform-minded party officials, such as Iurii Afanas'ev or Viacheslav Shostakovskii. Their only political experience by the mid-1980s had been the CPSU. This is surely crucial for any understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the movements in question. After creating democratically oriented independent movements, these people put the criticism of the CPSU's policies at the top of their organizations' agendas. Therefore, after the CPSU was banned by Yeltsin in late 1991, many of the independent movements lost their raison d'être. This part of the picture is largely missing in the book.

Despite these limitations the authors make a significant contribution to our understanding of the new role of society in the last stage of the USSR's existence.

VERA TOLZ
RFE/RL Research Institute, Munich

Economic Reforms and Welfare Systems in the USSR, Poland and Hungary. Ed. Jan Adam. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991. xv, 182 pp. Index. $55.00.

This book contains papers on the Soviet Union by Janet Chapman, Elizabeth Clayton and Murray Feshbach (assisted by Ann Rubin). It contains papers on Poland by Henry Flakierski and Zbigniew Fallenbuchl; and papers on Hungary by Zsuzsa Ferge and János Timár. There is nothing about Czechoslovakia or the other countries of eastern Europe but Jan Adam contributes a perceptive Introduction. As the book's title indi-

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cates, the papers focus on the so-called implicit social contract betwen regime and population in state-socialist societies, on the nexus of wages and employment, the impact of price control, health care and social policy.

Jan Adam provides a succinct and persuasive restatement of the implicit social contract hypothesis. He explains how the individual components of the "contract" came into being and how they developed in the different countries of the region. In this he goes beyond the restricted confines of the rest of the book. He then goes on to discuss some of the problems caused by the contract. Here I believe he is mistaken; in the USSR at least, the "contract" was perceived as unsatisfactory by both regime and working class much earlier than Adam suggests. Indeed, the proposition that both sides had reneged on the original contract and were in the process of searching for a new agreement provides a thought-provoking framework in which to locate the history of Soviet social policy in the 1980s. Nevertheless, Adam's discussion provides a stimulating introduction to the issues and will certainly appear on my students' reading lists for the next few years.

The papers on the USSR and Poland also contain much that is new and helpful—as one would expect from their authors. I will certainly give them to students to read; and other specialists will learn much from them. But, at the end of the day they are unsatisfactory. This is not the fault of the authors; it is a reflection of the genesis of the book and of the radical political changes that have taken place in the region in the last three or four years.

The book started life as a panel at the 1989 meeting of the AAASS. At that time, there was no indication that there would be a coup in the USSR in August 1991 or that the Soviet state would collapse. The political structure and future of Poland was also still unclear. As a result, the papers are conceived on the basis of mistaken assumptions about the nature of the political environment and prospects for economic development. Although for the most part they describe the recent past rather than focus on a non-existent future, they are written as contributions to economic and social analysis rather than as recent history. In some way that I am unable to identify clearly, this affects the credibility of authorial judgements.

The papers on Hungary do not suffer from this weakness. Neither Ferge nor Timár attended the 1989 meetings in Chicago; they were invited to contribute to the collection subsequently so as to provide a broader perspective. As a result, their papers were written later—after the change of regime in Hungary. It may also be significant that the authors of both Hungarian papers still live and work in the country; they are still intimately involved with the politics of social and labor market policy in Budapest. The authors of all the other papers live in the United States of America. Inevitably, they are not in such close contact with current politics; their focus is more academic.

Alastair McAuley
University of Essex

The Soviet Household under the Old Regime: Economic Conditions and Behavior in the 1970s. By Gur Ofer and Aaron Vinokur. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992. xviii, 396 pp. Index. Appendix. References. Tables. Hard bound.

The first question any prospective reader would want to know about this collection of articles by Gur Ofer and Aaron Vinokur is: what value could a book based on a household budget survey of former Soviet citizens conducted in the mid-1970s possibly have today? The authors give three justifications for publishing these studies together at this late date. The first reason is essentially analytical: the articles "provide a general benchmark of the point of departure into the new era." The second justification is historical: the survey data that were collected on the Soviet household sector are unique and help us to describe the economic behavior of individual households in everyday Soviet life; like Sparta, the USSR will be studied as a fascinating historical puzzle. The third justification is methodological: these studies demonstrate that west-

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